

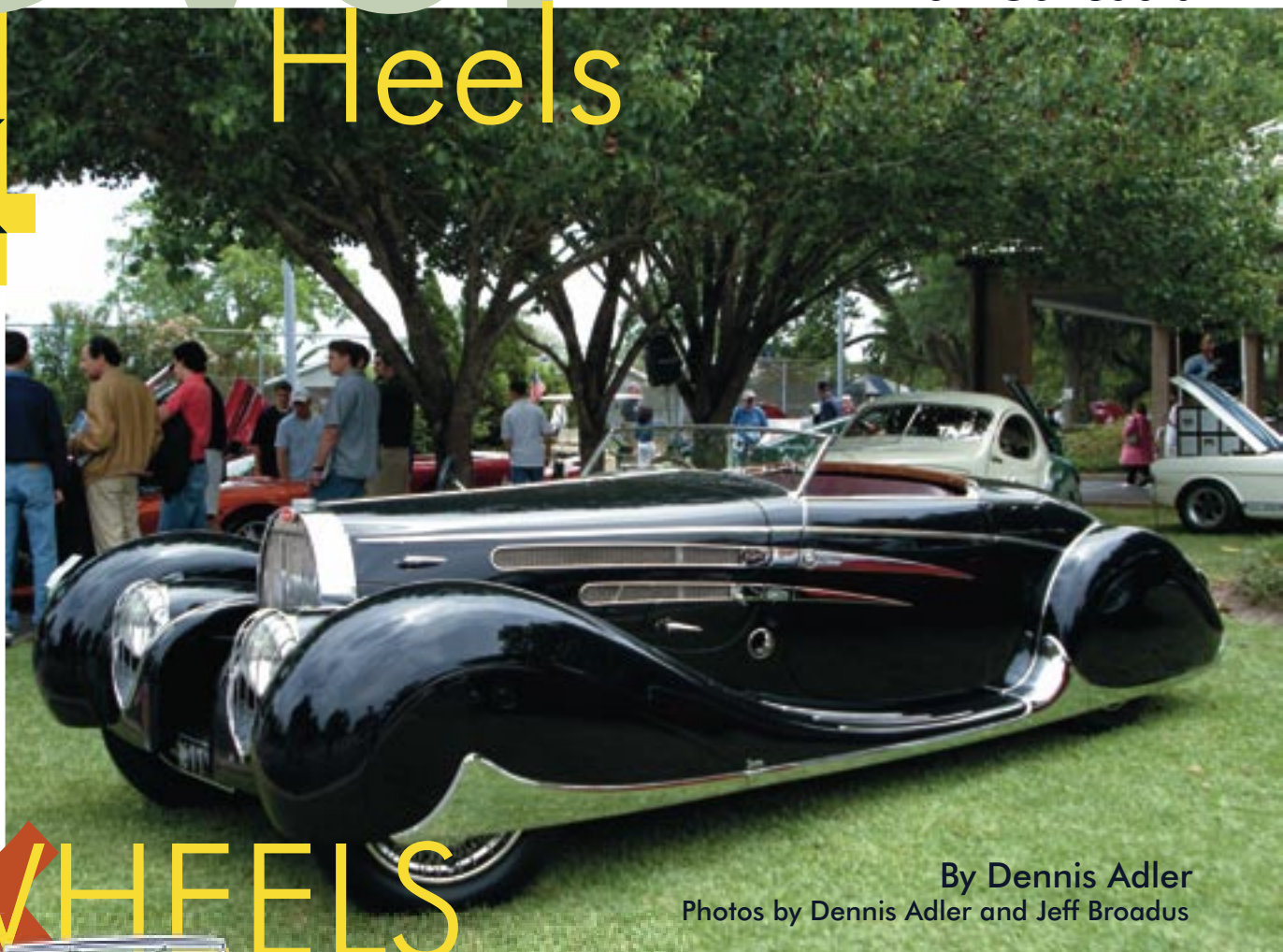
Head

Over

Heels

The Lone Star State's 10th Annual Surf and Turf Concours

4 K E E L S & W H E E L S



By Dennis Adler
Photos by Dennis Adler and Jeff Broadus



It would have been a tie for Best of Show between these two magnificent cars had Bob Fuller not decided to have two Best of Show awards, one for American and one for European.

Keels & Wheels is the second oldest of several concours that presently combine classic and postwar automobiles with wooden boats and luxury craft. The one feature all of these events have in common is access to a marina, but Keels & Wheels goes it one better, this annual car and boat event is staged at the Lakewood Yacht Club in Seabrook, Texas, just a booster rocket's throw from NASA headquarters in Houston.



Stirling Moss and Shelby G.T. 350 owner Ron Proler pose with the car that Moss called his "favorite car of all time."



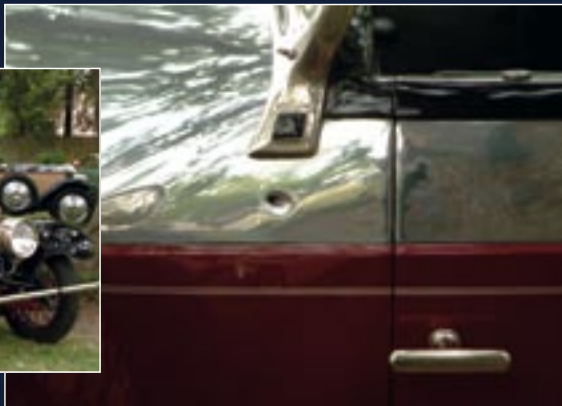
Sir Stirling Moss was this year's Keels & Wheels Grand Marshall. Sir Stirling and Lady Moss were flown over for the event through the courtesy of Continental Airlines and Ron Proler, who owns the former Moss Shelby G.T. 350.



By anyone's assessment, this is perhaps the most beautiful 1955 Corvette V8 in the world and the hands-down winner of the Corvette Class.



Bullet-hole Rolls



This is a Rolls-Royce with a story. Belonging to a wealthy businessman during the days of Prohibition, the owner's wife liked to frequent speakeasies, and against his wishes continued to do so until one night the chauffeur-driven car was caught in the crossfire between police and bootleggers. A bullet penetrated the cowl and lodged in the dash next to the terrified woman who later that night demanded that her husband have the car repaired immediately. The next morning he told her, "No my dear, the bullet hole shall remain as a reminder of your indiscretion." Every owner since has kept the bullet hole intact, and the bullet is still lodged in the dash!

The prestigious Lakewood Yacht Club has an enormous marina that allows many more boats to be displayed than at similar events, save for the exclusive, invitation only, Ocean Reef Club Concours d'Elegance in Florida. The Lakewood Yacht Club's expansive grounds also provide room for nearly 200 motorcars from all eras to be displayed in an open, park-like setting. It is simply the best of both worlds for automotive and boating enthusiasts alike.

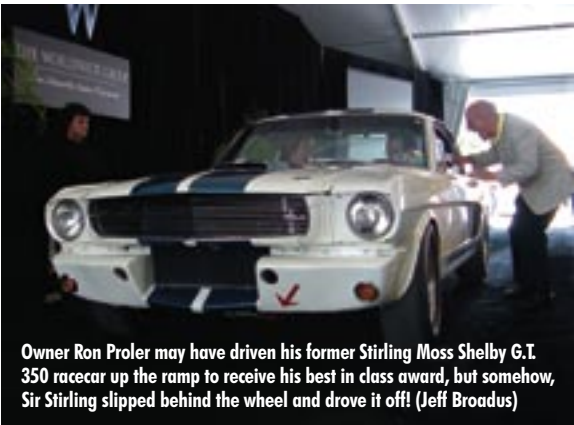
For the event's 10th anniversary, Concours Chairman Bob Fuller and his staff, along with the Southwest Chapter of the Antique & Classic Boat Society brought together an unprecedented collection of significant wooden boats, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Chris Craft Cobra and Century Coronado.



The most famous of the Chrysler Ghias, the Thomas Special, was part of this year's "Gathering of Ghias" display. The car is now owned by John O'Quinn. (Jeff Broadus)



An elated Dick Messer, Director of the Petersen Auto Museum, clutches a class award and a fashion model as Stirling Moss looks on. (Jeff Broadus)



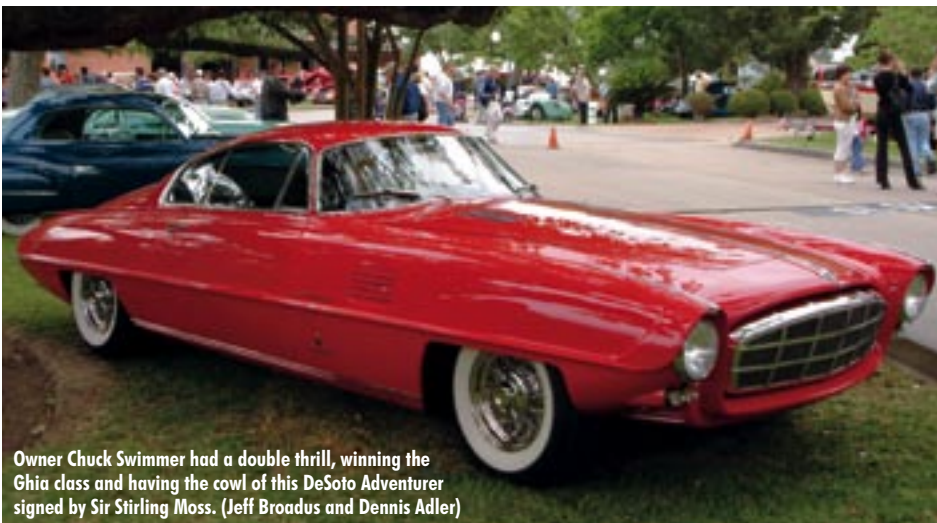
Owner Ron Proler may have driven his former Stirling Moss Shelby G.T. 350 racecar up the ramp to receive his best in class award, but somehow, Sir Stirling slipped behind the wheel and drove it off! (Jeff Broadus)



For landlubbers, (that's nautical talk for car collectors), there was a special exhibit of Ghia-bodied cars, and a well-rounded field of antique, classic, postwar American and sports cars to please any automotive taste.

The centerpiece of this year's event was a 1965 Shelby G.T. 350, and before you shake your head and grieve for the good old days when the most important car on display was a classic, this was no ordinary G.T. 350; it was the car once owned and vintage raced by Sir Stirling Moss at Laguna Seca, Goodwood, Silverstone and the Nürburgring, among other international venues. Collector Ron Proler, of Houston, acquired the car in 2004, and with the cooperation of Continental Airlines, brought Sir Stirling and Lady Moss over from London so the legendary race driver could be this year's Grand Marshall. Upon seeing his once victorious Shelby, Sir Moss, now a sprightly age 76, smiled and remarked that it was his favorite car of all time. Reason enough to give the Shelby center stage at this year's Concours d'Elegance, along with an Aston Martin DB4-GT raced by Moss for Aston Martin in 1959, and a 1957 Maserati 450 S driven by Moss in the Mille Miglia and shared with Juan Fangio in the '57 Nürburgring race.

For the thousands of spectators who attended the two-day show, there were a lot of favorites on both land and sea. The relationship between automobiles and boats is legendary. A case in point brought up during the Concours, was that celebrated British sports car builder Donald Healey also built boats. During the awards presentation on Sunday, Sir Stirling lamented, to the laughter of the audience, that he had once owned a Healey boat, but had regrettably run it aground on a reef in the 1950s, whereupon it sank. He had been reunited with a simi-

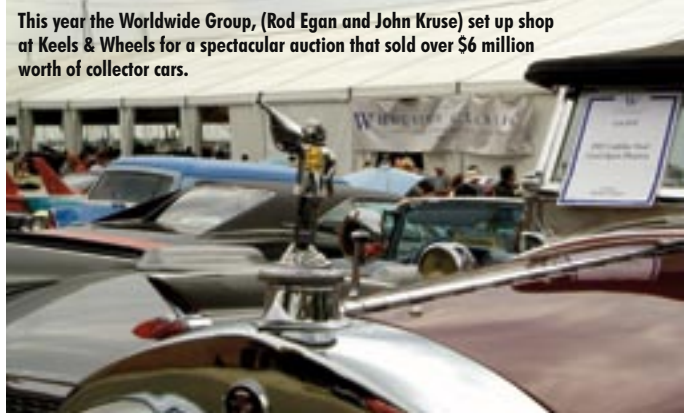


Owner Chuck Swimmer had a double thrill, winning the Ghia class and having the cowl of this DeSoto Adventurer signed by Sir Stirling Moss. (Jeff Broadus and Dennis Adler)





Left: Houston attorney John O'Quinn is fast building one of the best car collections in America and this year captured the Best of Show award for this stunning black Model SJ Duesenberg Brunn Riviera.



This year the Worldwide Group, (Rod Egan and John Kruse) set up shop at Keels & Wheels for a spectacular auction that sold over \$6 million worth of collector cars.

lar Healy craft on Saturday afternoon, when it was brought onto the Concours field for display.

Diversity has become a part of nearly every concours in America, even Pebble Beach, and the opening of doors, so to speak, at Keels & Wheels allowed a striking mix of postwar cars, antiques, American and European classics, and sports cars, to compete in a remarkable 39 different classes! And as at the Amelia Island Concours this year, Keels & Wheels also opted to have two Best of Show winners, in this instance one for Best American car and one for Best European (foreign) car. It was a wise decision too, for as it turned out, the two winners would have otherwise been a tie for Best of Show!

The special "Gathering of Ghias" this year brought together six Ghia-bodied cars including the famous 1953 Chrysler Ghia Thomas Special, a 1953 Delahaye, the 1954 DeSoto Adventurer, and a Dual Ghia.

For political historians, Texas will always be remembered for the assassination of John F. Kennedy, and making no small concession to that dark page in our nation's past, this year there was a special display of Jacqueline Kennedy's bubble top Lincoln town car (owned today by Houstonian John O'Quinn) and represented by retired Ford and Lincoln Motor Car Company executive Cal Beauregard.

The strongest class showing was postwar American cars, and not surprisingly a preponderance of Chevrolet and Ford models spanning the 1950s and 1960s, among which was what everyone had to agree was the most beautiful 1955 Corvette V8 anyone has ever seen. Owned by local Seabrook resident Steve Newsome, the car's livery was the rare and striking Harvest Gold and Dark Green combination, of which it is estimated only 120 were built in both six and V8 models.

Postwar sports cars also held a dominant position on the show field with Jaguars, Ferraris, Maseratis, Lamborghinis, MGs, and Morgans all in individual classes.

Lest anyone think that Keels & Wheels has become a post-war show, American and European classics were well represented by Lincoln, Duesenberg, Marmon, Cadillac, Packard, Bugatti and Rolls-Royce. In fact, as expected, the Best of Show cars were classics, the 1933 Model SJ Brunn Riviera owned by John O'Quinn, and the 1939 Bugatti Type 57C Roadster owned by the Petersen Museum.

For anyone with a love of automobiles and elegant mahogany wooden boats, Keels & Wheels has evolved over the last decade into the best open-to-the-public show of its kind in the Country. Something to consider when you're making your travel plans next April!

